



Weekly Drought Brief Monday March 3, 2014

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Recent Precipitation: Strong winter storms hit California beginning Wednesday, bringing heavy rain and snow across the state. Both Northern and Southern California received significant rain, and the Sierra Nevadas gained substantial snowpack. Heavy rains in Southern California brought mudslides and a limited number of home evacuations in Los Angeles County. Storms continued through the weekend, mostly trailing off on Sunday.

Precipitation totals (in inches) from Monday, February 24 through Sunday, March 3:

- **Folsom:** 2.60" in the last week. 10.95" since July 1, 68% of normal by this date.
- **Fresno:** 1.11" in the last week. 3.40" since July 1, 25% of normal by this date.
- **Hetch Hetchy:** 3.15" in the last week. 13.48" since July 1, 51% of normal by this date.
- **Los Angeles:** 3.84" in the last week. 5.04" since July 1, 44% of normal by this date.
- **Modesto:** .14" in the last week. 4.55" since July 1, 48% of normal by this date.
- **Oroville:** 2.04" in the last week. 12.16" since July 1, 50% of normal this date.
- **Pollock Pines:** 2.48" in the last week. 16.72" since July 1, 43% of normal by this date.
- **Redding:** 4.02" in the last week. 12.84" since July 1, 50% of normal by this date.
- **Sacramento:** 1.49" in the last week. 6.45" since July 1, 41% of normal by this date.
- **Shasta:** 6.62" in the last week. 19.72" since July 1, 42% of normal by this date.
- **Willits:** 2.76" in the last week. 19.64" since July 1, 51% of normal by this date.

Near-term Outlook for Precipitation: Smaller storms are likely this week in northern California, with a very high likelihood of precipitation along the north coast and inland to Redding. By Wednesday or Thursday, rain and snow could spread to the central part of the state, from the Coast Range to the Sierra Nevada. More modest rainfall is expected with these storms than last week.

****Despite two large storms over the past three weeks, heavy rain and snow would have to fall throughout California very frequently from now until May to reach average annual rain and snowfall levels.****

Now more than two-thirds of the way through the rainy season, many areas in the northern part of the state are at least 15 inches short of average annual precipitation. So it would take more than a half an inch of rain from Redding to Fresno every other day until May to get back to average precipitation in the watersheds that supply most of California's drinking and irrigation water. Even with such precipitation, California would remain in drought conditions, due to low water supplies in reservoirs from the two previous dry years.

Snow survey: The most recent [snowpack survey](#), conducted on February 27, recorded California snowpack at 24% of normal. A more [recent update](#) using automated devices after the recent storm (March 2) shows snowpack at 32% of normal.

Reservoir Levels (% capacity): [Reservoir Levels](#) as of March 1 remain low, including: Lake Don Pedro 52%; Exchequer 21%; Folsom Lake 32%; Lake Oroville 40%; Millerton Lake 32%; New Melones 44%; Pine Flat 19%; San Luis 33%; Shasta 39%; and Trinity Lake 49%. An update of water levels at [other smaller reservoirs](#) is also available.

Vulnerable Water Systems: The California Department of Public Health is providing technical and funding assistance to help several communities facing near-term drinking water shortages and is monitoring water systems across the state to determine where else it can provide support. Updated information can be found at the [CDPH Drinking Water Program](#) website.

Fire Danger: 643 fires have been reported across the state since January 1, burning 1,344 acres. CALFIRE reports that this current fire activity is well above the year-to-date average of 200 fires, burning 626 acres. 37 new fires were reported over the past week.

KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM LAST WEEK

Federal Government

- **USDA declares two more California counties disaster areas:** Agriculture Secretary Vilsack [has declared Riverside and San Diego counties](#) official disaster areas, bring the total number of counties in this category to 56 of California's 58 counties. Farmers in these counties are eligible for low interest emergency loans, grants from the emergency conservation program and other disaster assistance programs. Only Imperial and San Francisco counties have not yet been declared primary disaster areas by the USDA.
- **NASA technology to monitor drought impacts:** The National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA) [announced it will apply](#) remote sensing technology to detail impacts of the drought, such as fallowed fields and reduced groundwater supplies. NASA [is providing this information](#) to the state's Department of Water Resources to help manage water resources.

State Government

- **State's Drought Emergency Bill becomes law:** In one week after it was introduced, emergency drought legislation passed both chambers of the California legislature almost unanimously and was [signed by the Governor Brown](#). The bill provides funding for shovel-ready water projects and emergency assistance to communities, including:
 - \$549 million to increase storm water capture and use of recycled water, improve management of groundwater storage, and strengthen water conservation.
 - \$40 million from the proceeds of the state's cap-and-trade program to help local water agencies, farmers and large buildings reduce their water and energy use.
 - \$25 million for emergency food assistance in areas hard-hit by the drought.
 - \$21 million for housing-related assistance to drought victims.
 - \$15 million to help communities that face drinking water shortages.
 - \$14 million to improve groundwater management across the state and help to poor communities with groundwater contamination exacerbated by the drought.The bill also streamlines state rules to enable more water recycling, strong enforcement of water rights and housing assistance to migrant workers.
- **State Water Board continues allowing water conservation in reservoirs:** On Friday (February 28), the State Water Board's Executive Director extended the Temporary Urgency Change approved on January 31, which allows large reservoirs upstream from

the Delta to reduce flows from their reservoirs in order to retain water supplies for later in the year. The Executive Director will issue an updated order regarding this action on Wednesday, March 12.

- **CPUC requires water utilities to conserve:** The California Public Utilities Commission on Wednesday passed a directive that [orders private water utilities](#) to implement 20% voluntary water use reductions. The CPUC regulates all for-profit water utilities in the state, which provide water to approximately six million Californians.
- **Drought Task Force leaders begin regional meetings:** Agency Secretaries and other leaders of the state's Drought Task Force visited Mendocino County last Monday, which was the first of several regional meetings for the Task Force. [This visit](#) included briefings at the Lake Mendocino reservoir and at an emergency drinking water pipeline being constructed in Willits, as well as a large meeting with local officials in Ukiah. Task Force leaders will next travel to Merced for meetings on Tuesday of this week.
- **State Water Board holds public meetings on drought actions:** The State Water Resources Control Board held its third day of public workshops last Tuesday to discuss actions being taken in response to the drought. The Water Board is [posting video and presentations](#) from each workshop that provides detailed information on current drought conditions and proposed actions.
- **State Food and Agricultural Board Meeting to focus on drought:** On Tuesday, the State's Food and Agriculture board [will meet](#) at University of California-Merced to discuss the drought's impact on farmers, ranchers and farmworkers. Drought Task Force leaders will participate in the meeting, as well as agricultural associations, farmworker groups, and Central Valley Water agencies.
- **Water Commission holds workshop on drought's impact on small water systems:** The California Water Commission is [holding a workshop](#) in San Diego this week to discuss the impacts of drought on small water systems. State and local agencies will explore how to help small water systems challenged by the drought.
- **Cost Data:** Cal OES continues to gather drought-related costs from state agencies and local governments, which is reported weekly to the Drought Taskforce.
- **Governor's Drought Task Force:** The Taskforce continues to meet daily to take actions that conserve water and coordinate state response to the drought.

Local Government

- **Local Emergency Proclamations:** A total of 26 local Emergency Proclamations have been received to date from city, county, and tribal governments, as well as special districts:
 - **Counties:** Glenn, Inyo, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mendocino, Santa Barbara, San Joaquin, Sonoma, Sutter, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yuba
 - **Cities:** Brookside Township-Mendocino County, City of Willits-Mendocino County, City of St. Helena-Napa County, City of Calistoga-Napa County, City of American Canyon-Napa County
 - **Tribes:** Hoopa Valley Tribe in Humboldt County, Yurok Tribe in Del Norte County, Tule River Indian Tribe in Tulare County, Karuk Tribe in Siskiyou/Humboldt Counties
 - **Special Districts:** Lake Don Pedro Community Services District, Placer County Water Agency (PCWA), Twain Harte Community Services District, Carpinteria Valley Water District
- **Water Agency Conservation Efforts:** The Association of California Water Agencies [has identified](#) over 100 local water agencies that have implemented water conservation actions. These water agencies [are responding to the drought](#) by implementing

conservation programs, which include voluntary calls for reduced water usage and mandatory restrictions where water shortages are worst.

- **County Drought Taskforces:** A total of 22 counties have established drought task forces to coordinate local drought response. These counties include: Butte, Madera, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Monterey, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Siskiyou, Solano, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, and Tuolumne.

DROUGHT RELATED WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

Governor's [Proclamation of Drought Emergency](#)
State's Water Conservation Campaign, [Save our Water](#)
California Department of Food and Agriculture, [Drought information](#)
California Department of Water Resources [Current Water Conditions](#)
California Data Exchange Center, [Snow Pack/Water Levels](#)
California State Water Resources Control Board, Water Rights, [Drought Info and Actions](#)
California Natural Resources Agency, [Drought Info and Actions](#)
California Department of Public Health, Drinking Water [CDPH Drinking Water Program](#)
California State Water Project, [Information](#)
USDA Drought Designations by County [CA County Designations](#)
USDA Disaster and Drought Assistance Information [USDA Programs](#)